# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 26 January 1999, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Grey (United States of America)

GE.99-60443 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 810th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset of our meeting, allow me to express on behalf of the Conference our profound sympathies and condolences to the people of Colombia in relation to the recent tragic earthquake and loss of life.

I would now like to extend, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, who will be our first speaker today. We all recall that two years ago, very soon in his term as Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan made it a point to deliver a major statement to this Conference. I am sure we are all very grateful to the Secretary-General, who, despite his extremely heavy schedule, has found it possible to once again address our Conference. His presence among us yet again today is proof of his personal interest in the issues of arms control and disarmament and of the importance he attaches to our forum. I am certain that I speak for all of us when I express my conviction that the presence of Mr. Kofi Annan today will give decisive impetus to our work.

In addition to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, I have on my list of speakers for today the Ambassador of Egypt.

I invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, to make his statement.

Mr. ANNAN (Secretary-General of the United Nations): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on assuming the leadership of this important forum at such a critical juncture in world history.

When I addressed you in 1997, and again, later that year, when I submitted my reform programme to the General Assembly, I stressed the central importance of disarmament in the global agenda, and the primary responsibility for it which falls on the United Nations. I am glad that Member States endorsed my proposal to reorganize the Secretariat's disarmament activities. The newly re-established Department for Disarmament Affairs has only limited human resources. But it is now diligently implementing the mandates entrusted to it, which include the servicing of this Conference.

Your Conference is now 20 years old. It is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, and it now comprises all militarily significant States. This is a good moment to look back, to assess our experience so far, and to learn from it so that we can better face the new challenges ahead.

Your Conference can take pride in having produced two major international legal instruments, which have greatly contributed to the search for a world free from the threat of weapons of mass destruction: the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1992 and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. The former entered into force in 1997, and I am glad to say its

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implementation is well under way. The latter has now been signed by 151 States, including all five nuclear-weapon States, and has been ratified by 26, including two nuclear-weapon States. As depositary of these two instruments, I shall continue to urge all States that have not yet ratified or acceded to them to do so, in order to ensure their universality.

Just two multilateral agreements may seem a meagre harvest after 20 years of work, especially when there are so many other issues in your field which cry out for joint action at the global level. But the value of your Conference cannot be measured simply by counting the treaties it produces. Before multilateral negotiations can even start, you have to create the right political conditions. That means holding long in-depth discussions, and doing a great deal of technical spadework.

There is always a "pre-negotiating" stage, in which some shared understanding is reached that a security problem exists, that it has certain dimensions, and that it must be addressed multilaterally. This process may be arduous and time-consuming, but without it there is no guarantee that the end product, that is to say, treaty-making, will take the security concerns of all parties into consideration. And an agreement which fails to do that will ultimately be neither universal nor effective.

A case in point is the hard work it took to develop consensus that this forum should deal with the important issue of a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. That work was rewarded last year, when you decided to set up an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate such a ban. And the consensus was further strengthened this year, when the General Assembly adopted, without voting, a resolution endorsing that decision.

You must now make full use of the momentum thus created, and embark on meaningful negotiations for a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty. By so doing, you will greatly help the cause of nuclear non-proliferation, and the process of general nuclear disarmament.

In the same cause, it is important to establish effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Your decision to consider this in the framework of an ad hoc committee is an important step in this direction. Security Council resolutions 225 of 1968 and 984 of 1995, together with the unilateral declarations made by the five nuclear-weapon States, provide a good framework for solving this important issue. However, further steps are needed to harmonize the unilateral security guarantees offered by the five nuclear-weapon States in a single legally binding instrument.

The issues we have to address in the field of arms limitation and disarmament are vast and complex. So we cannot afford to ignore any possible avenue, whether bilateral, regional or global. During the past few years, concerned Member States have made praiseworthy efforts to consolidate existing

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nuclear-weapon-free zones - notably those in Africa and South-East Asia - and to move towards the establishment of other such zones, for instance in Central Asia.

Meanwhile, States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention have been intensifying their efforts to seek ways and means of reinforcing its authority by working out a verification regime. That task is horrendously complex, but the stakes are high indeed. Their efforts deserve the support and cooperation of all.

Anti-personnel landmines are another source of acute concern to the international community. So it is good news that the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons - a partial ban on landmines - entered into force last month, while the Ottawa Convention will enter into force in a little over one month's time. Preparations are already under way for a first meeting of the States parties to those two Conventions during this year. We must do everything we can to ensure that as many States as possible adhere to both of them, and as soon as possible. And I earnestly hope your own efforts in this field will soon result in a decision to start negotiations on a ban on transfers of these barbaric weapons.

The flow of small arms and light weapons circulating in civil society, especially in regions where State structures are fragile, is now also receiving wide international attention. And more and more people are now working to build a global consensus on monitoring and controlling illicit arms transfers. I therefore welcome the decision taken by the General Assembly, in its current session, to convene an international conference here in Geneva on all aspects of the illicit arms trade, not later than the year after next.

But all these positive developments, important as they are, should not blind us to the fact that the global disarmament agenda is very far from complete. The underground nuclear tests conducted last year by India and Pakistan were a highly disturbing development and a source of concern for the world community. I immediately urged those States to refrain from further nuclear testing, to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, to refrain from deploying nuclear weapons and to freeze their weapons development programmes, as well as the development of missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

I therefore warmly welcomed the declarations of intent to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty which the Prime Ministers of both countries made in the General Assembly last September. I very much hope that both Governments will be able to act on those declarations in the course of this year.

Meanwhile, there are difficulties in the preparatory process leading up to next year's Review Conference of the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Taken together, these developments remind us all just how fragile the nuclear non-proliferation regime is, unless and until it is buttressed by more determined efforts to reduce existing nuclear arsenals,

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with a view to their ultimate elimination. Such efforts would undoubtedly benefit from the early ratification of START II by the Russian Federation and its entry into force as soon as possible.

The international community has rightly identified nuclear disarmament as a high priority. Your Conference has before it a number of proposals for mechanisms to deal with this issue. I trust that during this session you will reach consensus on the ways in which the Conference can best contribute. One concept which is now widely shared is that of maintaining outer space as a weapons-free environment. Currently, over 30 countries are engaged in space-related activities, and more are moving in that direction. Technology, too, continues to evolve rapidly, especially in the area of ballistic missiles.

Of course, technology can also help. Space-based remote sensing makes an important contribution to the monitoring and verification of multilateral disarmament agreements. But that in no way diminishes the importance of your efforts to codify principles which can ensure that outer space remains weapon-free.

The history of successive multilateral disarmament forums shows that they were able to evolve over the years in response to changed political realities. This evolution affected all aspects of disarmament negotiating bodies: their composition, their agenda and their working methods. The Conference on Disarmament is no exception in this respect. You have a record of endeavour and of lasting achievement, of flexibility and expertise. You must live up to that record by continuing to play a leading role in the work of building a world which no longer relies on weapons for its security.

Once again, I pledge that your efforts will have the full cooperation of the United Nations Secretariat; and I wish you a productive and successful session.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General for his important statement. I shall now suspend the plenary meeting for five minutes so that the Secretary-General of the Conference and myself may escort the Secretary-General out of the room.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 10.25 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: The plenary meeting is resumed. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): I wish first, Ambassador Grey, to express to you my delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 1999 session. I am confident that your diplomatic skills and experience, as well as your positive and energetic approach, will speed up the start of the substantive work of the Conference following the adoption of its agenda last week. I wish on this occasion also to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation and to express to you our best wishes for success

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in your tasks. I would also take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Ian Soutar of the United Kingdom, who guided the work of the Conference admirably throughout the final part of the 1998 session. Furthermore, I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the members of the secretariat for their contribution in facilitating the work of this Conference. I would like also on this occasion to welcome our new colleagues who have recently joined us at the Conference on Disarmament, namely Ambassador Reyes Rodríguez of Colombia, Ambassador González of Argentina, Ambassador Suchánková of Slovakia, Ambassador Molander of Sweden, Ambassador Peleg of Israel, Ambassador Wirajuda of Indonesia and Ambassador Rodríguez Cedeño of Venezuela. I extend to all of them my best wishes for success during their work in Geneva.

We have listened with great interest today to the important statement made by Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in which he referred to a number of essential principles in the field of disarmament. I would like to take this opportunity to express to the Secretary-General our full appreciation of the important elements to which he referred, as well as to reiterate Egypt's firm commitment to work earnestly and diligently for the achievement of the objectives of general and complete disarmament with minimum defence requirements being assured at the regional level, and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in accordance with the priorities adopted by the international community at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978.

Mr. President, your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament comes at a vital stage at the beginning of the 1999 session, a time of increasing challenges and rising hopes. The past year has witnessed some serious setbacks for the global non-proliferation regime, but also demonstrated the indisputable desire of the international community to overcome these challenges by finally and irrevocably ridding the world of all nuclear weapons. The first step along this road is undoubtedly the fulfilment by the nuclear-weapon States of their responsibilities under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In the statement I made on behalf of Egypt at the Conference on Disarmament on 26 March 1998, ahead of the second session of the NPT PrepCom, I warned that the persistence of the attitudes adopted by a few countries in the Conference on Disarmament would block negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference and jeopardize the outcome of the second session. Today I can only reiterate the same words of caution in the hope that we have all learnt a lesson from the failure of the second session. It is essential to review the extent of the progress achieved in the application of all the decisions and resolutions on the Middle East upon which the indefinite extension of the NPT was based. I certainly hope we will exert earnest efforts to avoid a repetition of the same results at the meetings of the third PrepCom in the spring of this year.

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The ultimate goal of the 1968 NPT was the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The preamble and article VI of the NPT are clear in this regard. Article VI states that - and I quote in English:

(continued in English)

"Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament."

(continued in Arabic)

We accepted this in 1968, trusting that, after a maximum period of 25 years, that is to say in 1995, this objective would be attained. Since 1968, however, this "early date" has not yet come. Against this background the nuclear-weapon States should listen to the voices of billions of people around the world. They should listen to the message delivered to them loud and clear by non-governmental organizations. They should also listen to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice which stated in 1996 - and I quote again in English:

(continued in English)

"There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."

(continued in Arabic)

The nuclear-weapon States should listen to the voice of reason instead of formulating unconvincing arguments, especially in this post-cold-war era. Reason dictates that the time has come to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons from all parts of the world. A number of constructive proposals have already been tabled regarding the mandate of such an ad hoc committee. The Group of 21 as well as a number of the members of the Conference on Disarmament, such as Egypt, South Africa and Algeria, have tabled specific proposals for such a mandate.

In this connection, Egypt submitted a proposal to the Conference on Disarmament (document CD/1453 dated 1 April 1997) containing a draft mandate for the ad hoc committee which took into account the various concerns of States. It called for parallel negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a comprehensive agreement banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices pursuant to paragraph 4 of the decision on "Principles and objectives" of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. In the light of our 1998 decision to establish an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (a committee whose re-establishment

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we support within the context of this year's programme of work), the Egyptian delegation has further developed its previous proposal in such a way as to limit it to the mandate of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, because the part concerning a ban on the production of fissile material has already been dealt with. Let me read this new proposal to you in English.

(continued in English)

"Draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament

"The Conference decides to establish an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1 on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament with the objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

"In discharging its function, the ad hoc committee will take into account the proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons submitted by 28 members of the Conference belonging to the Group of 21 (CD/1419) as well as any other existing proposals and future initiatives in this regard."

(continued in Arabic)

Therefore, Sir, I would like to request the secretariat to distribute this new Egyptian proposal as an official CD document to be taken into account, together with any other proposals, in the Conference's deliberations.

The programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, which I had the honour to submit to the Conference on Disarmament on 8 August 1996 on behalf of 28 delegations from the Group of 21, is an important input intended to contribute to the start of negotiations in the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament once it is established by the Conference on Disarmament. This programme of action recognizes that there is a need for active multilateral efforts to identify, negotiate and implement specific step-by-step measures for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons at both the regional and international levels. The programme of action also contains concrete measures to be taken by the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in three phases, the last of which takes us up to the year 2020. Furthermore, the report of the Canberra Commission and any other proposals could also be taken into consideration when negotiating a phased programme of nuclear disarmament with the objective of implementing the NPT provisions and responding to the will of the international community. Progress must be achieved in this field if we wish to ensure the success of the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

In response to the pressing desire of the international community, and in order to effectively meet the challenges facing the global non-proliferation regime, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of eight countries, namely Ireland, Brazil, South Africa, Slovenia, Sweden, Mexico, Egypt and New Zealand, issued a declaration on 9 June 1998 entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". This declaration was officially presented to the Conference by the delegation of Sweden on behalf

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of the eight States on 11 June 1998. The international community adopted the principal ideas contained in this declaration in the form of General Assembly resolution 53/77 Y, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority. The resolution called for the pursuit, in parallel, of a series of mutually reinforcing measures at the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels. All these measures have become necessary and can brook no procrastination or delay. The Conference on Disarmament was specifically called upon to take a number of these measures, such as the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with the question of nuclear disarmament as well as to pursue its negotiations on a ban on the production of fissile material, taking into consideration both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament objectives. The resolution further called for the conclusion of an internationally legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. I wish, in this regard, to emphasize Egypt's resolve, in cooperation with others, to follow up on these essential steps in the Conference on Disarmament.

Egypt's support for the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", to conduct negotiations on a convention to prohibit the production of fissile material, comes within the context of the preparation of a comprehensive programme of work which includes all the major issues on the agenda. For such a convention to achieve its objectives, it should include substantive and practical measures for nuclear disarmament. The scope of such an international document should therefore cover all fissile material potentially usable in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices throughout the world, including the military stocks of these materials possessed by all States, on an equal footing.

One of the principal characteristics of such an international instrument must be its non-discriminatory nature in the sense that a uniform regime for strict international verification should be applied to all States and to all facilities capable of producing fissile material in all States without exception. On the other hand, such a treaty must be internationally and effectively verifiable, which means that the international instrument to be negotiated should be based on absolute transparency, which implies that all facilities anywhere in the world that are involved in the process of the production or storage of fissile material must be subject to a strict regime of control and inspection. In other words, the entire nuclear fuel production cycle must be placed under such an international regime. It is also essential to create or develop a reliable regime to detect any undeclared nuclear installations or undeclared stocks of fissile material.

No potential treaty or convention banning the production of fissile material can imply any form of de jure or de facto international recognition or acceptance of the possession of nuclear weapons by any State not a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty or of the indefinite possession of such weapons by the five nuclear-weapon States specified in the NPT. On the contrary, any international instrument to be negotiated should clearly and

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unambiguously call upon all Stats to accede to the NPT in order to achieve the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons, as stipulated in article VI of the NPT, within a predictable time-frame.

The best and most comprehensive nuclear security assurances will be provided only when the international community has achieved the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Until this dream becomes a reality, and in order to save mankind from the nightmare of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under the present discriminatory nuclear non-proliferation regime, and to ensure respect for the most sacred human right, namely the right to life, the non-nuclear-weapon States are in dire need of effective legally binding security assurances. The assurances given to non-nuclear-weapon States on a unilateral or plurilateral basis by the five nuclear-weapon States, which are referred to in Security Council resolutions 255 and 984, fail to meet the security requirements of the non-nuclear-weapon States since they are conditional, non-comprehensive, not legally binding and have not been negotiated multilaterally. Hence, the Conference on Disarmament must implement the decision on "Principles and objectives" adopted by the NPT Review Conference in 1995 by starting serious negotiations on a multilateral and legally binding instrument to provide non-nuclear-weapon States with such complete assurances as soon as possible. To this end, we are in favour of the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate security assurances for non-nuclear States during the 1999 session, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/75, which was adopted without opposition and which recommended that the Conference on Disarmament should actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement and concluding effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We believe that the said ad hoc committee should build upon the work that was achieved during the Committee's last session under the chairmanship of Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico, who exerted creative efforts to define the points of agreement and the points that required more thorough consideration. It is therefore necessary that the Committee should begin to consider, during the present year, the drafting aspects of the required international instrument.

Under item 5 of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, entitled "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: radiological weapons", the delegation of Egypt wishes to voice its concern at reports that some States are currently in the process of developing new generations of other types of weapons of mass destruction. We find it disturbing that this category is no longer confined to the radiological weapons taken into account in SSOD-1 in 1978. During the 1998 session the delegation of Egypt requested that UNIDIR should undertake a study on radiological weapons in order to assist the Conference on Disarmament in this respect. Today, the delegation of Egypt renews this request with the further stipulation that the study to be prepared by UNIDIR should include any other categories of weapons of mass destruction being developed in the laboratories and research centres of any State. These considerations have prompted us to call for negotiations on a legally binding international convention to ban the production or development of any other categories of weapons of mass destruction as alternatives to biological, chemical or nuclear weapons. It is

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opportune to recall in this context President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak's proposal not only to establish an area free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East but also to convene an international conference to ban the production or use of weapons of mass destruction anywhere in the world.

General Assembly resolution 53/76, which is presented jointly to the First Committee every year by Egypt and Sri Lanka, called upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to that objective which could lead to the militarization of outer space. This resolution also invited the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the ad hoc committee on that subject and to update the mandate of that committee with a view to beginning negotiations on the conclusion of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. We believe that it is necessary to build upon the excellent efforts of Ambassador Palihakkara of Sri Lanka, the Special Coordinator on this issue during the 1998 session and speedily move towards the establishment of an ad hoc committee which will take into consideration the progress made in the ad hoc committee which the Conference established at its previous sessions.

Egypt also believes that the issue of transparency in armaments must be dealt with as a comprehensive and non-discriminatory confidence-building measure in such a way as to cover all kinds of armaments. Egypt regrets that all the efforts made to expand the scope of the United Nations Register have not yet yielded the required results since the Register remains limited to the annual notification of transfers of seven categories of conventional arms and continues to disregard other sophisticated and lethal types of conventional arms as well as weapons of mass destruction and advanced technologies with military applications. Moreover, the Register does not cover stockpiles of weapons or procurement from local production. That is why, at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Egypt submitted to the First Committee a draft resolution on transparency in armaments, which was adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 53/77 S, in order to highlight the need for a comprehensive approach that would ensure full transparency in regard to all types of armaments.

We would welcome consideration of the various aspects of transparency in armaments during the 1999 session of the Conference on Disarmament with a view to bridging the gap between the differing viewpoints and addressing the security requirements of all member States, including those not participating in the Register. In order to build upon the commendable efforts made by Minister Plenipotentiary Pavel Grecu of Romania, the Special Coordinator on this issue during the 1998 session, the Egyptian delegation believes that there is a need to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate on the issue of transparency in armaments, as stipulated in the programme of work proposed by the Group of 21 during the 1997 session, so that transparency would become complete, thereby constituting a confidence-building measure as well as an early warning of the military capabilities of all States, which would highlight cases in which an accumulation of such capabilities posed a threat to international peace and security at both the regional and international levels.

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Egypt is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, with about 23 million landmines laid on Egyptian soil by foreign Powers during the Second World War and the Middle East conflict. The clearance of these mines is of high priority to Egypt in order to provide the necessary security for our civilian population and resolve this serious humanitarian problem, which is also impeding the implementation of numerous economic and social development projects in Egypt. The full technical and financial responsibility for clearance of these mines should be assumed by the foreign Powers which laid them.

Egypt is aware of the magnitude and severity of the problems related to the proliferation of anti-personnel landmines in the world, and particularly in Africa. This is primarily a humanitarian issue. However, we believe that measures to ban landmines should be accompanied by serious and concrete steps towards mine clearance in affected countries, especially those which are unable to achieve this objective unaided. Therefore, it is essential to provide the financial and technical support and transfer the advanced technology needed to help these countries to overcome this humanitarian and security problem. This should be taken into consideration in the negotiating mandate of the Conference on Disarmament. In this connection, I would like to refer to World Health Assembly resolution WHA51.8, adopted on 16 May 1998 and entitled "Concerted public health action on anti-personnel mines", which took into consideration the serious consequences of anti-personnel landmines and the importance of developing public health programmes for anti-personnel-mine injury prevention and control. Operative paragraph 5 of the said resolution reads as follows:

(continued in English)

> "Urges Governments that have planted mines in the territories of other countries to provide the latter with the required maps and identification of the minefields they planted and to cooperate in minefield clearance in the countries concerned so as to avoid further injuries and deaths of civilians".

(continued in Arabic)

This resolution has been distributed as an official CD document (CD/1514). In this regard, I would also like to refer to resolution 1998/30, entitled "Injurious effects of anti-personnel landmines", adopted at the fiftieth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on 26 August 1998. Operative paragraph 5 of this resolution reads as follows, and I quote in English:

(continued in English)

> "Urges all countries responsible for the laying of anti-personnel landmines in foreign territories to assume full responsibility for the necessary mine-clearance operations and to cooperate with the host countries for this purpose in every possible way, in particular developing countries".

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(continued in Arabic)

This resolution was likewise distributed as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1553). In the light of the above, and taking into consideration the constructive dialogue initiated by Ambassador Campbell of Australia, the Egyptian delegation supports the reappointment of a special coordinator on APLs on the understanding that he will take into consideration, when drafting a negotiating mandate, the need to clear old landmines laid by States in the territories of other States as well as the necessary exceptions to accommodate national security concerns of States and their legitimate right of self-defence enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly those States with long borders traversing uninhabited areas, as is the case with Egypt. Such exceptions are necessary in order to combat the illicit smuggling of drugs and weapons aimed at undermining the stability and national security of these States through the spread of terrorist operations and criminal activities across their borders.

We should not neglect the three important substantive and organizational aspects that will help to improve the performance of the Conference on Disarmament. While expressing our profound appreciation for the efforts that have been exerted by Ambassadors Hofer, Náray and Illanes during the 1998 session, we have no objection to the reappointment of three coordinators or one coordinator to deal with the expansion of membership, review of the agenda and the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament in order to continue to consolidate the useful ideas that were put forward in the course of the last session.

I wish to take this opportunity to renew our request that non-governmental organizations should be allowed to participate as observers in CD plenary meetings. They should also be accorded the opportunity to make statements before the Conference on Disarmament in view of their positive contributions in the field of disarmament. This should be taken into consideration as a means to improve the functioning of the CD and render it more effective.

These are some of the matters of interest and concern which the delegation of Egypt has seen fit to raise in this statement so that they can be taken into consideration when preparing the CD's programme of work for 1999, as we have already adopted our provisional agenda at the plenary session on 21 January 1999. I conclude my statement by expressing our sincere hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be ready, at its 1999 session, to assume its responsibility as the only multilateral forum for global disarmament negotiations, particularly on the issues which are of priority to the international community, the most important of which is nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. RUIZ BLANCO (Colombia) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, on this occasion I am taking the floor simply to express thanks to you and the other delegations which have expressed sorrow at the natural disaster which occurred recently in my country. I would also like to thank all of you for the words of support and solidarity which my delegation has received.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Colombia. This concludes our business for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

Before I adjourn this meeting, I should like to inform you that intensive consultations are under way with a view to developing a consensus on the programme of work of the Conference, making full use of the delicate and balanced compromises reached at the end of last year, and taking into account proposals made by delegations.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 28 January 1999, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.